

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAGUA 3322

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TAGS: PFOR, PGOV, NU

SUBJECT: REACTION TO ANDERSON COLUMNS ON SOMOZA

REF: MANAGUA 3321

SUMMARY: JACK ANDERSON'S SERIES OF ATTACKS ON SOMOZA'S BUSINESS DEALINGS HAVE CREATED STRONG RIPPLES HERE. SOMOZA IS OUTRAGED BY THE ALLEGATIONS AND DISTURBED BY REFERENCE TO USG DOCUMENTS. HE IS THRASHING ABOUT LOOKING FOR SCAPEGOATS AND WAYS TO AMELIORATE A SITUATION WHICH IS BEING VIEWED WITH GLEE BY HIS OPPOSITION. U.S. RELATIONS WITH GON MAY BE AFFECTED ADVERSELY UNLESS WE FIND WAY TO ALLAY SOMOZA'S SUSPICION THAT WE CONTRIBUTED TO ANDERSON RESEARCH.

1. JACK ANDERSON'S RECENT COLUMNS ON PRESIDENT SOMOZA'S ECONOMIC HOLDINGS AND DEALINGS HAVE PRODUCED STRONG LOCAL REVERBERATIONS. THIS DESPITE THE FACT THAT THE COMPLETE TEXTS OF THE ARTICLES HAVE BEEN SEEN BY VERY FEW PEOPLE SINCE THE WIDELY CIRCULATED AIR EDITION OF THE MIAMI HERALD, WHICH SUBSCRIBES TO ANDERSON'S COLUMN, HAS AS YET FAILED TO CARRY IT. BUT GIST OF COLUMNS HAS BEEN CARRIED BY SEVERAL WIRE SERVICES, AND THIS, COMBINED WITH RUMORS AND SPECULATION, HAVE PIQUED GENERAL CURIOSITY AND SHARPLY EMBARRASSED PRESIDENT SOMOZA.

2. GON SOURCES TELLS US THAT SOMOZA IS OUTRAGED PRINCIPALLY BY REFERENCE IN COLUMN TO HIS MISTRESS DINORAH SAMPSON, AND CONSTERNATED BY UNREMITTING CRITICAL TONE OF ARTICLE WHICH
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LUMPS FACTS, HEARSAY AND OUTRIGHT UNTRUTHS TOGETHER. EVEN

SOMOZA'S SEVEREST LOCAL CRITICS (E.G. PEDRO JOAQUIN CHAMORRO) BELIEVE THAT ANDERSON CLEARLY OVERSTEPPED THE BOUNDS OF PROPRIETY AND JOURNALISTIC ETHICS WITH THESE COLUMNS.

3. SOMOZA HAS BEGUN TO SWING WILDLY IN REACTION. THERE ARE RUMORS THAT FIRST SECRETARY OF THE NICARAGUAN EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON HAS BEEN RELIEVED BECAUSE OF HIS INABILITY TO REFUTE ANDERSON'S ASSERTIONS WHEN HE HAD THE CHANCE. ON THE OTHER HAND, WHEN PRESIDENTIAL PRESS SECRETARY, EFRAIN HUEZO, REPORTEDLY ACTING ON SOMOZA'S INSTRUCTIONS, PREPARED AND BEGAN TO DISSEMINATE TO THE FOREIGN PRESS A POINT-BY-POINT REBUTTAL OF THE CHARGES, THE MOVE WAS CHALLENGED BY SECRETARY OF THE PRESIDENCY CARLOS DUBON AND OTHERS, AS FUTILE AND COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE. WE UNDERSTAND THAT AS A RESULT THE HAPLESS, BUT ADMITTEDLY INEPT HUEZO, HAS NOW BEEN FIRED BY SOMOZA FOR HIS POOR JUDGMENT.

4. LA PRENSA PUBLISHER PEDRO JOAQUIN CHAMORRO MAY AGAIN BE SINGLED OUT BY SOMOZA AS CULPABLE. CHAMORRO TOLD POLOFF AUGUST 21 THAT HE HAD BEEN INFORMED BY URBAN PLANNING VICE MINISTER IVAN OSORIO TWO DAYS BEFORE THAT SOMOZA WAS CONVINCED MOST OF THE INFORMATION HAD COME FROM CHAMORRO (ANDERSON HAD REFERRED TO TRANSLATED DOCUMENTS COMING FROM NICARAGUA). OSORIO ALSO WARNED CHAMORRO THAT A VINDICTIVE SOMOZA WAS LIKELY TO RENEW THE PERSONAL PERSECUTION OF CHAMORRO WHICH HE HAD RELAXED FIVE MONTHS AGO. AS PREDICTED, CHAMORRO WAS UNABLE TO PUBLISH AUGUST 20 (MANAGUA'S 3201) AND HE HAS INFORMED US THAT MANY OF HIS DISTRIBUTORS ARE CURRENTLY BEING SUBJECTED TO PRESSURE AND HARASSMENT BY LOCAL NATIONAL GUARD OFFICERS. CHAMORRO HAS WRITTEN SOMOZA A LETTER, WHICH HE PREVIEWED TO US, PROCLAIMING HIS INNOCENCE OF ANY CONTACT WITH ANDERSON, DENOUNCING SOMOZA'S TACTICS AND CLAIMING EVEN WHERE ANDERSON IS CLEARLY OFF BASE, SOMOZA HAS ONLY HIMSELF TO BLAME BECAUSE OF HIS UNDEMOCRATIC METHOD OF GOVERNMENT AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST.

5. NICARAGUAN AMBASSADOR TO U.S. SEVILLA-SACASA HAS BEEN DESIGNATED AS THE OFFICIAL SPOKESMAN OF THE GON IN THE MATTER AND IS SCHEDULED TO MAKE A STATEMENT WHEN HE RETURNS TO WASHINGTON FROM MANAGUA ON AUGUST 25.
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6. OWING TO THE ALMOST MYSTICAL BELIEF BY MANY THAT THE KEY TO THE END OF THE SOMOZA DYNASTY LIES IN THE ATTITUDE OF THE U.S., THE ANDERSON ARTICLES HAVE HAD A DEFINITE, ALBEIT, INCALCULABLE EFFECT, ON THE INTERNAL POLITICAL SITUATION. THE ARTICLES HAVE ENCOURAGED THE SIMPLISTIC HOPE THAT U.S. PUBLIC OPINION WILL FORCE THE USG TO ABANDON SOMOZA AND THAT THIS WILL RENDER HIM VULNERABLE TO A DETERMINED EFFORT TO OUST HIM.

THERE ARE INDICATIONS THT SOMOZA HIMSELF IS AWARE OF THESE
OMINOUS PERCEPTIONS AND IS NOT LIKELY TO IGNORE THEM.

7 OUR RELATIONS WITH SOMOZA ARE LIKELY TO BE AFFECTED AD-
VERSELY BY THE ARTICLES, BECAUSE OF THE REFERENCE TO U.S.
GOVERNMENT STUDIES AND HIS ALREADY DEEP-SEATED SUSPICION THAT
AN ANTI-SOMOZA CLIQUE IN THE EMBASSY AND THE STATE DEPT. HAS
EXISTEDFOR THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS. THE ANDERSON ARTICLES WERE
CELARLY WEIGHING HEAVILY ON HIM DURING THE FORMAL 15 MINUTE
CHAT WITH ME AT THE PRESENTATIONS CEREMONY AND HE HAS MADE IT
KNOWN THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO TALK ABOUT IT MORE AT LENGTH AS SOON
AS POSSIBLE. (SEE REFTEL) DUBON VOLUNTEERED TO POLOFF ON SAME
OCCASION THAT PRESIDENT WAS ESPECIALLY UPSET BY REFERENCE TO USG
STUDIES. CLEARLY WE MUST FIND A WAY TO ALLAY HIS SUSPICIONS
OR BE FORCED TO DEAL WITH HIM IN THE FUTURE IN A CLIMATE OF
DEEP DISTRUST, HARDLY SUITABLE FOR THE PURSUIT OF OUR INTERESTS.
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